

**RULES OF OPERATION
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF NURSING
INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE**

I. MISSION

The National Council of Nursing (NCON) is a consortium of nurse experts with representatives for Indian Health Service, Tribal and Urban programs. NCON provides leadership and advocacy for comprehensive health care delivery responsive to present and future health needs of American Indian and Alaska Native people.

II. PURPOSE

1. Provide a forum where Nursing Consultants and other Nursing representatives can meet on a regular basis to discuss issues, resolve problems, recommend action for change and keep abreast of current trends in nursing and health care.
2. Provide leadership and recommend policy on issues related to health, to assist IHS, Tribal and Urban programs in adapting to changes in legislation, regulation and health care standards.
3. Improve nursing program management at all levels through better communications and greater involvement in the total program.
4. Provide expert consultation and recommendations to the Agency Director.
5. Advocate for quality in nursing practice and patient/client care.
6. Collaborate with other professional councils to gain consensus on issues related to health.

III. GROUND RULES (to be followed at each meeting)

1. All members will be treated equally, courteously and respectfully, regardless of rank or title.
2. Time frames for meetings will be set and followed.
3. There will be open and honest communication.
4. All comments will be expressed in the group rather than outside.
5. There will be no interrupting the speaker.
6. Topics may be reintroduced if new information becomes available.

IV. MEMBERSHIP

1. The membership shall include two representatives from each IHS Area Nursing Program, to include: Aberdeen; Alaska; Albuquerque; Bemidji; Billings; California; Nashville; Navajo; Oklahoma; Phoenix; Portland and Tucson (each Area decides who their representatives are); two representatives of the National Council of Nurse Administrators (NCONA). Two Nurse Recruiters, two Urban Nurses and two Advanced Practice Nurses will be appointed by the HIS Principle Nurse Consultant in consultation with the respective practice group. This body constitutes the voting membership and the consensus decision-making body.
2. The Headquarters Nursing Program consultants shall be ex officio members but may participate in consensus decision-making.
3. Personal guests may be included in meetings and conference calls within their own resources. The Chairperson should be notified in advance of all guests. Guests shall be encouraged to participate in discussions.
4. Participation in NCON activities is expected, unless excused by the NCON Chair. NCON may request replacement of members who fail to participate on a regular basis. If replacement is requested, a letter will be sent to the appointing official.

V. OFFICERS

1. The officers of the NCON shall consist of a Chairperson, Chair-elect, Immediate Past Chair, and Secretary.
2. The officers shall serve a one-year term and may be reelected consecutively one time.
3. The Chair-elect shall assume the office of Chairperson for one year following his/her term as Chair-elect.

4. Elections shall take place annually in November. If a meeting is not scheduled, elections may be held by mail.
5. Nominations shall be made by the voting members at the conference call/meeting at least one month prior to the election. If a mail vote is needed, nominations shall be submitted to the Chair-elect. Nominees shall agree to run prior to being placed on the ballot and will obtain approval from their Area Director and/or program manager for Chair-elect (and subsequent Chair) positions.
6. Voting shall be by secret ballot. Counting of ballots shall be done by the Chair-elect. In a mail-in election, votes shall be mailed to the Chair-elect. If there is only a single nominee for an office, election shall be by acclamation.
7. In the event of a tie in the election of any officer, the winner shall be determined by lot.
8. In case of resignation, transfer or incapacity of the Chairperson, the Chair-elect shall complete the term of office. In the event the Chair-elect office is vacated a new election shall be held. If the Secretary office is vacated, the Chairperson may appoint a successor to complete the unexpired term. In the event all offices become vacant, an emergency election shall be held.

VI. RESPONSIBILITIES OF OFFICERS

1. Chairperson
 - a. Presides over the Council meetings and conference calls.
 - b. Appoints temporary committees and work groups.
 - c. Represents the Council at meetings and conference calls of the Indian Health Leadership Council, Executive Leadership Group and other meetings or functions as appropriate.
 - d. Presents recommendations on behalf of the NCON.
 - e. Monitors the status of recommendations.
2. Chair-elect
 - a. Assists the Chairperson.
 - b. Acts in lieu of the Chairperson, in the Chairperson's absence.
 - c. Coordinates agenda and logistics (facilities, supplies, etc.) for meetings and conference calls.
 - d. Assembles recommendations for presentation by the Chairperson.
 - e. Receives nominations and prepares a slate of candidates.
3. Secretary
 - a. Assures minutes are taken at all meetings and conference calls.
 - b. Distributes the minutes to all members within one month after a meeting or two weeks after a conference call.
 - c. Maintains complete file of minutes and other historical documents.
4. Immediate Past Chair
 - a. Attends Executive Leadership Group (ELG) meetings if Chair is unable to attend.
 - b. Acts as consultant to Chair and Chair elect.

VII. MEETINGS

1. Business may be conducted by telephone conference call or by face-to-face meeting. As appropriate, electronic mail and other communication processes may be utilized to facilitate the work of the NCON.
2. A quorum at a meeting or conference of the NCON call shall be simple majority of the areas/programs represented (9 areas/programs out of 16).
3. Time and place for the meetings and conference calls shall be decided by the membership.
4. Agenda items for meetings shall be solicited by the Chair-elect prior to the meeting.
5. Agenda items for conference calls shall be solicited prior to the next scheduled conference call.
6. Conference calls shall follow the approved, standardized agenda format.
7. The Improving Organization Performance (IOP) Process shall guide the conduct of all meetings. Decision-making is by consensus with each member, or designated alternate in attendance, participating. Guest comments will be taken into consideration.

VIII. COMMITTEES

1. There shall be one standing committee, which shall develop its own operating rules and elect its own officers. The Improving Organization Performance Committee (IOPC) is the official advisory to NCON on technical issues regarding performance improvement.
2. Temporary committees or work groups shall be appointed by the Chairperson to accomplish specific, delineated tasks.
 - a. Membership may include non-NCON members if specific expertise, knowledge or experience is required or desirable.
 - b. Assignment will depend upon the expertise needed and the willingness/interest of the proposed committee/work group member.
3. All policy issues from committees and work groups shall be brought before the NCON for approval prior to submission to the Agency/Director, unless authorized by the NCON to do otherwise.

IX. BUSINESS

1. Business of the NCON shall be conducted as a committee of the whole or as temporary committees/work groups.
2. The NCON and any temporary committees/work groups shall use whatever method (meetings, conference call, electronic mail, etc.) is needed to accomplish assigned tasks, dependent upon current budgetary, time and program constraints.
3. A plan of required actions shall be developed and approved by the membership. Additional activities may be added, as needed, with the consensus of the membership.
4. Meetings and conference calls shall begin with a review of the NCON Mission and Vision.
5. Meetings and conference calls shall be evaluated by the membership using a method approved by the membership.

X. REVISION

1. Rules of operation may be amended by consensus.
2. Proposed amendments shall be distributed to all voting members no later than one week prior to the meeting at which the rules are to be amended.
3. Rules of Operation shall be reviewed at least annually and revised as necessary.

Approved 9/00